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Brianna Schwabauer Whitcomb, Director
Jamie Whiteford, Executive Director

Vivon Crawford Sedgwick
Restoration Program Director
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
PO Box 1092 Ojai, CA 93024

5/14/2025

RE: Determination Letter - Ventura River Watershed Riparian Resilience Program Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects

Ms. Crawford,

As lead agency for the Ventura River Watershed Riparian Resilience Program (Project), this letter is to inform you that the Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VCRCD) submitted a request for concurrence to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director (Director). This concurrence request sought a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutory exemption for this Project in accordance with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.56, commonly known as the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP).

VCRCD submitted the SERP concurrence request January 10, 2025. VCRCD received notice of the Director's concurrence March 27, 2025.

Following the Director's concurrence, VCRCD initiated a formal review of the Project to determine whether it qualifies for a CEQA exemption pursuant to this Section. On May 14, 2025, VCRCD made a final determination that the Project is statutorily exempt due to the following considerations:

1. The Project is exclusively to restore and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife.
2. The Project may provide public benefits, but they are incidental to its fundamental purpose.
3. The Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resilience, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery and it includes ongoing measures to protect the environment.
4. The Project does not involve construction; activities are solely related to restoration.

In accordance with PRC subdivision (b), Section 21108 and subdivision (b), Section 21152, VCRCD will, therefore, file a notice of exemption with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) within 48 hours of this determination. Furthermore, as a local agency, VCRCD will also file a notice of exemption with the local county Clerk's office, initiating the mandatory 30-day public notice and review process.

Documentation of the OPR and Clerk's filings will be made available to you once they are received by VCRCD.

On behalf of VCRCD, I thank you for submitting this Project for review and I look forward to its implementation.

Jamie Whiteford, Executive Director
Ventura County Resource Conservation District
PO Box 147 Somis CA 93066